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GURNARD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PUBLIC MEETING 29th NOVEMBER 2012

The meeting took place at Gurnard Village Hall from 7.30pm and about 38 people attended, and 4 feedback forms were left.

Welcome & Introduction:

Richard Day welcome one and all, and briefly explained the makeup of the Steering Group, what the Neighbourhood Plan hopes to achieve and also gave some general details of the 1st general survey. He closed by saying that reports would be given by the 4 newly formed Focus Groups

Environment Focus Group:

Jon Pearson explained that the group was in its infancy but its remit would include wildlife, landscape character, renewable, eco-friendly practice, historic features & listed buildings. Also what could be improved, such as footpath networks – the group needs extra recruits. He gave a précis of some of the general survey responses for the best village aspects such as varied development design and shops, together with some less positive aspects such as fewer services than some expected. Challenges were identified as poor transport links, isolation, recent development proposals, holiday homes, parking issues, traffic speed, playing fields, no chemist, no circular village trail and damaged coastal footpath. The Cowes/Gurnard buffer and the Village “feel” should be protected, as should Tuttons Hill, Dottens Farm, Gurnard Luck and Gurnard Marsh.

Buildings, Development & the SHLAA:

Guy Boorman started by saying the group had no experts on it, just willing helpers who all want to help manage future change. He addressed some general survey questions relevant to this group, which included protection for Baring Road, Tuttons Hill, the Jordan Valley, Gurnard Luck and Marsh - existing green open spaces should also be protected. 2nd or holiday homes are not favoured, rather those that meet local need such as smaller starter homes, retirement homes, eco-build homes all of which are “affordable” for local people. He then mentioned the importance of the forthcoming Housing Needs survey, which will go out to every house to identify needs, resulting in the number and type of additional housing being identified. This survey will be launched in early spring 2013, and a good response is needed from the community – at least 40%, but even more would be encouraging. He closed by saying more members are needed for the group, before handing over to Terry Nolan to talk about the SHLAA:

Terry began by explaining the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan as a planning policy document, and highlighted the communication difficulties by saying that 66% of respondents were still not familiar with the SHLAA. He explained how things have progressed from the UDP days to more land being sought for development – this resulted in many areas being put forward by landowners, some of which was immediately rejected but 7 SHLAA sites have now been identified in Gurnard (Oaklands, Dottens Farm, Gurnard Farm, Place Road, The Glen, Baring Road/Tuttons Hill and Comforts Farm), with 6 of them being described as deliverable. Pressure is being brought to bear by developers, but there is no evidence of need yet. He also encouraged completion of the Housing Needs survey.

Regeneration, Economy & Tourism:

Bede Townsend explained the remit as including commerce, business and encouraging local tourism all of which is important to Village life. Creation of a business forum would be beneficial and support is needed. More people are needed on this group too.

He ran through some of the general survey question feedback relevant to this group, which highlighted transport as the biggest issue. Facilitating extra business would be supported, and the Post Office is sorely missed – could a satellite service be introduced? Existing shops etc are much appreciated - adding vibrancy to the Village and the Sailing Club attracts outsiders into the Village too. Green spaces could be better utilised and industrial units should be considered. Traffic & parking in Worsley Road is an issue, and again keeping the Cowes buffer in place was favoured. Small scale development is acceptable, such as infill and should all be affordable to local people. Large developments would not be welcomed, not are 2nd home developments. The old school playing field and orchard should be kept for the community, and the footpath network should be expanded and linked up. Preserve and protect were the by-words.

Social Wellbeing & Community:

Paul Fuller stated that feedback indicated most people were satisfied with Village life as it was. It was felt there was a strong local community that looked out for each other, and the pubs and local shops were well liked. Other facilities such as the Village Hall, All Saints Church and the mobile library services again are much appreciated, as is the generous community use given of the Spencer's field. Transport was again raised as an issue, especially for an afternoon or evening service. The loss of the Post Office was again mentioned, and there is a need for a medical centre and increased sporting, recreational and leisure activity opportunities/facilities. Additional cycleways would be welcomed, and of concern is Baring Road and Woodvale Road at school run times.

Other questions revealed the need of a play area for older children and young people, perhaps to include a MUGA and a youth club.

The rest of the meeting was spent in a question and answer session with the Steering Group dealing with at least 16 questions and comments which included:

- The community bus service
- The play area
- Woodvale Road parking
- Worsley Road parking obstructing buses
- Housing Needs survey being properly quantified – local & island-wide
- Housing Needs survey should also recognize the needs of those who may want to move into the village
- Publicising the Housing Needs survey process
- The need for a high response to the Housing Needs survey, and perhaps considering the use of freepost addressed envelopes too
- Increased use of Village volunteers
- Increased local profile of public meetings etc, and the Plan as a whole
- Wider input to the Housing Needs survey suggested – recognize outside forces at play, house sales are often made to those living outside the Village – perhaps 5% of the strategy should be to surrounding area
- Island housing targets
- Risks posed by planning decision appeals
- Variety of housing and business + other Village facilities
- Risk of Medina Valley AAP housing targets being imposed on Gurnard

The Steering Group was thanked and applauded for its work, and the meeting closed at 9.13pm.